



CUT DOWN PAPER WASTE

NOT TREES

Grade level

Intermediate (3-6)

Subjects

Social studies, science, math

Teaching Time

Week 1: 2 hours

Week 2: 1 hour

Skills

Collecting data, graphing, problem solving, analyzing.

Materials

A “Things We Threw Away Today” chart (on back), a waste basket.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to characterize the large volume of paper the class throws away. They will decide how to reduce their paper waste, then implement their plan. Students will discover that reducing waste is the first and most important step in solving the solid waste problem.

PROCEDURE

1. Remake the “Things We Threw Away Today” chart (on back) and place on a bulletin board or wall near the waste basket(s) at a height easily accessible to students.
2. Have students write their initials and what they discarded in the appropriate space every time they throw something away. Do not discourage students from using the waste basket.
3. At the end of the week, have students working in groups draw large bar graphs on butcher paper, plotting days on the horizontal axis and number of visits to the waste basket on a vertical axis. Hang these around the room. Have groups decorate their graphs to show what types of items were thrown away.
4. Discuss the following in groups and/or as a class:
What types of things were thrown away?
Approximately what percentage of those items thrown out was reusable paper?
What additional uses could have been found for this paper?
5. Have groups discuss ways that the class can recycle the paper that has been fully used.
6. As a class, put the best ideas into practice to reduce, reuse, and recycle paper. Set up a separate box to collect used paper for recycling.
7. One week after implementing these changes, put up a new chart and repeat the activity.
8. Discuss and compare the results as reflected on the bar graphs. Emphasize the effect awareness and informed decision-making can have on decreasing our own need for paper.

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ACTIVITY SHEET

NOT TREES

PRE & POST DISCUSSIONS & QUESTIONS



What materials do we use in the classroom every day which are made from trees?

Discuss what happens to paper when thrown away.

Discuss the environmental consequences of logging and paper production, the effects on streams, fish, air, and water quality.

How can you tell if something has been made from recycled paper? Look for the recycling logo on the package.

How can we reduce the amount of paper we throw away?

Referring to the fully used paper, ask: Can this paper be recycled into new paper or cardboard?

What would be the results if the whole school used two sides of the paper instead of just one?
Pollution reduced?
Energy conserved?

Does recycling have economic consequences?

How much energy could be saved by making paper from recycled materials rather than directly from trees?

What things are made from recycled paper? (New paper, packaging, and building materials).
Note: 80% of recycled paper is used in packaging.

NAME:

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|----------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| THINGS WE THREW AWAY TODAY | | | | | |